

First Aid FAQs

Why does the tongue swell in a severe allergic reaction?

An allergic reaction causes the release of chemical mediators (such as histamines) in the body. If the person experiences a severe allergic reaction, they may experience symptoms such as swelling (edema) of the tongue. Swelling of the face, neck, or tongue can block the airway and make it difficult to breathe.

Why is it OK to do a head tilt–chin lift on a person who may have a head, neck, or spine injury?

Someone who isn't breathing won't survive if you don't give them breaths. There are other methods of opening the airway, but they also may move the head, neck, or spine, and the other methods may not be as successful for opening the airway.

Why don't you give anything by mouth to a person with diabetes who isn't responding?

If the person isn't responding, they may choke.

What solutions are most effective for preserving a knocked-out tooth?

Hank's Balanced Salt Solution, also known as *HBSS* (containing calcium, potassium chloride and phosphate, magnesium chloride and sulfate, sodium chloride, sodium bicarbonate, sodium phosphate dibasic, and glucose), is demonstrated to have efficacy at prolonging dental cell viability from 30 to 120 minutes, and it may be available to first aid providers. If this is unavailable, wrap the tooth in cling film. If neither HBSS or cling film is available, store the person's tooth in cow's milk or in the injured person's saliva—not in the person's mouth. Do not store the tooth in tap water.

Why is it best to have non-latex gloves in the first aid kit?

Some people are very allergic to latex and may not know it. When you put on gloves, latex may be released into the air.

Suppose I don't get any blood or body fluids on my gloves. Can I reuse them?

No. You may not see any blood or body fluids on the gloves. However, some may still be there. Remove and dispose of the gloves properly.

How do I know whether bleeding is minor, moderate, or severe?

If the cut is not bleeding or is a small abrasion, assume the cut is minor. Wash a minor cut with soap and water and once the bleeding has stopped, you can apply an antibiotic ointment, provided the person has no known allergies, before applying a bandage. For moderate bleeding, you'll want to use pressure to stop the bleeding before applying a bandage. Assume bleeding is severe if it does not stop or slow down with pressure and blood is quickly soaking through the bandage.